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SUBJECT: THE NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT SHERPA MEETING IN VIENNA

REF: STATE 94449, UNVIE 425

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Special Assistant to the President and U.S. Sherpa Gary Samore outlined the preliminary agenda of the Summit and solicited initial reactions from participants in a September 15 first Sherpa meeting. Samore explained to representatives of nearly all 37 Summit-invitee countries the ways in which the goals of the Nuclear Security Summit were distinct from other big events, such as the upcoming NPT Review Conference in May. Argentina and Egypt, two G-77 heavy-hitters openly skeptical of the threat of nuclear terrorism, questioned the basis of the Summit. South Africa, Russia and Pakistan asked detailed and occasionally pointed questions about the ground that would be covered and the intended outcomes. Switzerland, disgruntled at not appearing on the Summit invitee list, attended the Meeting as an observer. The remaining thirty-odd representatives were enthusiastic about confronting the threat of nuclear terrorism and participating in a Summit to draw attention to the issue. Even skeptical participants applauded the goals and timing of the Summit. Morocco proved a serious G-77 advocate, while Canada, Germany and Japan played the role of dependable and supportive allies. Above all, the Sherpa Meeting and related side meetings served to clarify basic questions about the upcoming Summit and encourage the appointment of high-level Sherpas. The next Sherpa Meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 3 in Japan.  
End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) White House WMD Coordinator Gary Samore presided over the first of three Sherpa Meetings September 15 in Vienna, intended to guide preparations for the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, April 12 - 13, 2010. (Thirty-seven countries had been recently invited to the Summit, with additional invitations to be provided to UN Secretary General Ban, IAEA Director General-designate Amano, and an appropriate EU representative.) More than thirty invitee states were represented at the short-notice

Vienna Sherpa Meeting in some capacity. Samore opened by explaining the concept of the Summit as an outcome of President Obama's April 5 speech in Prague, where the President described nuclear terrorism as "the most immediate and extreme threat to global security." The President hopes to use the Summit to develop a common understanding of the threat posed by nuclear terrorism at the highest political level, Samore said. Other tangible outcomes included improving measures to secure nuclear material and prevent nuclear smuggling and terrorism. Samore emphasized the need to focus the Summit on Nuclear Security issues and leave broader issues of disarmament, nonproliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy issues for other venues, such as the NPT Review Conference.

13. (SBU) Samore urged invitees to use the Summit as a venue for announcing specific steps they are taking nationally to secure and consolidate nuclear materials in the civilian sector. Rather than inventing a new initiative, Samore hoped the Summit would reinforce existing mechanisms that support the concept of Nuclear Security, such as the IAEA's Office of Nuclear Security (ONS), UN Security Council Resolution 1540, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and the G8 Global Partnership. Samore proposed the release of a communique at the close of the Summit that would outline, on a consensus basis, the commitments made by leaders during the Summit (to be worked out in advance of the event). Samore also speculated about the likelihood of industry participation during one of the final segments of the Summit.

14. (SBU) Anticipating questions regarding the invitee list, Samore explained NSC efforts to invite a regional and representative balance of countries that have the most direct, national responsibility for securing nuclear materials due to extensive holdings of nuclear materials and facilities or because they were likely to acquire or develop such holdings in the future as peaceful uses of nuclear power grows. Some countries were potential transport points for smugglers, another motivation behind the invitations. NSC Senior Director for WMD Terrorism and Threat Reduction Laura Holgate, Dr. Samore's sous-Sherpa, led a discussion on the proposed Summit agenda, noting the overall theme of the Summit: Every nation has the sovereign responsibility to secure all weapons-usable materials to the highest standards, to ask for assistance or support should that be needed, and to provide help if asked. IAEA Director of the Office of Nuclear Security Anita Nilsson followed up with comments on the IAEA's role in Nuclear Security and steps that countries could take to prevent terrorists from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Non-state actors are key elements in Nuclear Security, Nilsson asserted, distinguishing the field from state-to-state proliferation concerns as dealt with in the NPT. Nilsson emphasized that the greatest risk of an improvised nuclear device came from civilian-source material.

15. (SBU) Most participants in the Sherpa Meeting were broadly supportive of its goals and timing, and of the narrow focus on Nuclear Security. Canada was particularly effusive, while others, like Belgium, simply stated their support and interest. Many were attracted by the Head-of-State / Sherpa duality that could successfully marry high-level political commitment with follow-through at the expert level. Indonesia and Spain asked specifically about the relationship of the Summit to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT). Building on this reluctance to confuse their leaders, Singapore wondered how effectively the many related initiatives could be handled at the highest levels. Japan questioned whether leaders would be able to engage in meaningful exchange on what is fundamentally a technical topic. There was also some difficulty in understanding the divisions between Nuclear Safety (preventing human or equipment error) and Nuclear Security (preventing malicious acts from the outside). Brazil pointed out that in Spanish, both Safety and Security are translated into the same word ("seguridad").

16. (SBU) South Africa posed a number of very specific questions regarding the agenda, such as how to distinguish "illicit networks" from smuggling. South Africa also criticized the use of the words "law enforcement" in the draft Summit agenda as insufficiently cooperative in tone. South Africa also requested more elaboration on nuclear forensics, asking whether the topic included material accounting. Other participants also shared pointed questions about the proposed communique, China and Russia in particular. China warned that it would not agree to mentioning (in the communique)

initiatives to which it was not a part.

¶17. (SBU) Argentina, represented by its local Ambassador, questioned Samore about the underlying assumptions of the Summit and the non-binding nature of Nuclear Security arrangements. He emphasized that in recent years the scope of security had grown, in his mind inexplicably: "I do not mean mission creep, I mean it has exploded." He also questioned a proposed Summit agenda item that combined smuggling and terrorism, describing them as separate issues (smuggling is well defined, terrorism is "vague"). Finally, Argentina questioned the communique and promised (or perhaps warned) that his government would have to "consider the proposal closely."

¶18. (SBU) Argentina was the most pessimistic participant, even more so than the predictably combative Egyptian representative, who opened with an observation that there were different "perceptions" of the level of the terrorist threat. Egypt also asked a deceptively innocent question about the links between nonproliferation and Nuclear Security. (Egyptian representatives routinely argue that disarmament and the NPT are indelibly linked to the issue of Nuclear Security, while the U.S. and other like-minded countries prefer to address the two task sets separately.) Egypt signaled "full support" for the Summit but complained about the lack of attention to "nuclear facilities." Egypt also felt compelled to note each country's "domestic responsibilities" for Nuclear Security, another digression that serves to distract from the ways international cooperation can be strengthened.

¶19. (SBU) In sharp contrast to these comments, Morocco spoke earnestly about the threat of terrorism and of nuclear terrorism in particular, noting that terrorists seek safe havens - countries with weak program or deserted areas. Morocco called for resources to support countries' infrastructure, border monitoring, etc., but also support for norms and standards. Morocco hoped the Summit would address such topics.

Bilateral Exchanges Delve Deeper  
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¶10. (SBU) Samore and Holgate also held a number of bilateral meetings during the period September 14-16. During these exchanges, Samore's interlocutors were at times even more candid about the goals and potential pitfalls of the Summit. Russia and Brazil pleaded for simplicity in the communique as a way to bring countries quickly and efficiently to consensus. Pakistan was proud of its participation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), but, like others, wondered how the Summit intersected with GICNT.

¶11. (SBU) The invitee list remained an ongoing issue - additional proposals for invitees included Afghanistan (proposed by Japan), Malaysia (proposed by Australia and Germany), Thailand (proposed by Germany), Armenia and Belarus (proposed by Russia and accompanied by the prediction that Belarusian President Lukashenko would "behave himself"). An interlocutor representing the European Commission (EC) suggested that Samore watch closely the outcome of the Irish vote on the Lisbon Treaty this fall as an indicator of the appropriate EU representative.

¶12. (SBU) Germany remained stalwart in its support, signaling Chancellor Merkel's "personal commitment" to the goals of the Summit and her readiness to help with deliverables. Germany also noted its recently announced intent to contribute 10 million Euros to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund. Japan was also enthusiastic and agreed with Samore and Holgate to hold the next Sherpa meeting on December 3 in Tokyo. Looking to the future, the EC representative strongly supported a biannual Summit. Russia also raised the topic, offering to host a follow-on summit in 2012.

¶13. (SBU) As during the Sherpa Meeting, Argentina and Egypt proved themselves tricky to deal with in the bilateral context. They both cast doubt on Nuclear Security as a concept that lacked definition, unanimity, and specificity (as in, does Nuclear Security apply to both materials and facilities?). Argentina reiterated the need to address divisions between Nuclear Security and Safety, as well as divisions between legally binding standards and voluntary guidelines. Egypt stressed the importance of distinguishing between

non-state actors and proliferators. Ever vigilant of NPT issues, Egypt also asserted that it would not join international cooperation to secure stockpiles in non-NPT states, an activity that would only serve to legitimize unsafeguarded stockpiles.

¶14. (SBU) Pakistan also shared its reservations about the Summit, warning that the proposed threat briefing during the Summit "should not single out any particular country." Pakistan also counseled careful treatment of nuclear forensics (a sensitive topic). Pakistan went on to complain that its status as an NPT non-signatory had unfairly prejudiced its standing on Nuclear Security. For example, Japan had decided against finalizing a radiation detection equipment deal due to Pakistan's NPT status, and the U.S. had failed to recognize Pakistan's contributions to the Container Security Initiative and Megaports Initiative.

¶15. (SBU) Australia had given a fair amount of thought to the Summit's objectives, and suggested that it could help advance issues such as strengthening best practices in Nuclear Security, expanding the IAEA's International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) missions, improving implementation through the IAEA Nuclear Security Program, and improving connections among security/safeguards/safety. Australia also suggested using the Summit to strengthen the Additional Protocol as a condition for sensitive transfers or to suggest reporting of export denials as well as approvals, but recognized these may be outside the realm of the Summit. Despite Samore's statement that the Summit is not intended as a pledging conference, Australia indicated it would be willing to pledge new funds toward a concrete and constructive work plan, especially of activities in the Pacific.

¶16. (SBU) Russia echoed a previous suggestion from China that the large size of the guest list would be unwieldy in the development and negotiation of text, and that an informal "core group" of about 10 nations should be developed to work on issues leading up to larger meetings. Suggested core group members include Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the U.S.

Comment

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¶17. (SBU) Invitations to the Sherpa Meeting came too late to attract uniformly high-level participation in this initial meeting, but this may have been a blessing in disguise, allowing invitees to pose basic questions and get a feel for U.S. goals. The outcome of the meeting will be passed back to capitals, informing national officials and influencing the identification of "real" (and hopefully high-level) Sherpas for the next meeting. The well-attended and generally positive event bodes well for building both momentum and interest in the goals of the Summit. It can only be hoped that increasing attention to the issue at the highest levels will serve to bring skeptics like Argentina and Egypt into accepting - and actively addressing - the threat of nuclear terrorism. End Comment.

DAVIES